HOW TO PRACTICE ON THE PIANO: REFLECTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Heinrich Ehrlich

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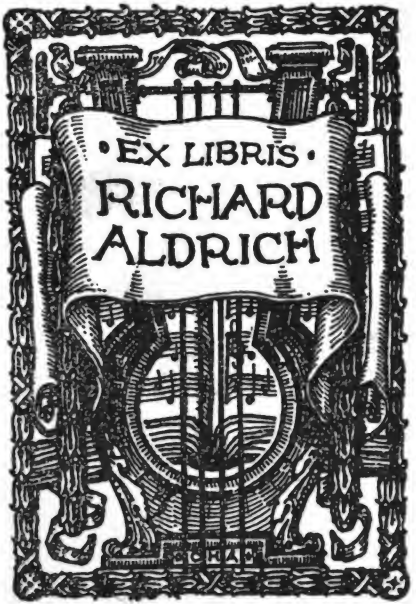

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How to Practise on the Piano

REFLECTIONS

AND

SUGGESTIONS

BY

H. EHRLICH

WITH PRECISE DIRECTIONS FOR THE PROPER
USE OF THE
TAUSIG-EHRLICH "DAILY STUDIES"

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY

J. H. CORNELL

SECOND EDITION REVISED BY

DR. TH. BAKER

NEW YORK: G. SCHIRMER

1901

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HOW TO PRACTISE ON THE PIANO.

It is not, by any means, the aim of this work to set up a new Method of Piano-playing in general, or to supersede or oppose any method already established; but, on the contrary, to form a *Supplement to all methods*, and to call the attention of unprejudiced experts to a manner of *practising, not of executing*, which has hitherto not been attempted, and from which the author has obtained the best results. At the outset it certainly presents some difficulties; but it provides, within a short time, the surest means for the pupil's guarding against a wrong position of hand and wrist, and for unerringly regulating the various positions for the *Legato* and *Staccato*, for octaves and double trills in one hand, and also of forming a correct fingering, which is attainable, in fact, only through a correct position of the hands; precisely in this matter of teaching his pupils to finger passages for themselves, the author has obtained results which were often surprising.

Every teacher and learner has experienced how difficult it is, so to regulate the position of the fingers, hand and wrist, and of the arms, that each may act independently of the others. To attain this end, years of practice by the pupil and the unremitting attention of the teacher are often necessary. All kinds of machines, hand-guides, etc., have been invented for promoting the proper hand-position. They may do some good, but labor under this disadvantage, that the

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pupil depends too much on them, so that after they are given up it is long before he can do independently what with their aid was easy enough. This independence from the very outset, without the aid of any apparatus, is what the author aims to promote. The method of practising which he here presents, renders every incorrect position of the fingers, and more especially of the wrist, and every objectionable movement of the arms, impossible *from the beginning*. It is adapted for beginners — of course with great caution and moderation; but with more advanced pupils, who have had one and a half or two years' instruction, it may be carried out strictly, with perfect confidence. Always, however, even in the case of very advanced pupils, due moderation must be strictly observed and prescribed to the pupil for practice by himself.

In presenting this method to experts, teachers and learners, the author must most emphatically declare, and will often repeat, that he submits it, not as an *authoritative* system of instruction in itself, but as an important aid to *practice*, standing in the same relation to piano-study as gymnastic exercise to the ordinary motions of daily life. Such exercise does not teach walking, dancing, graceful deportment, etc., nor does it give any particular expression to the countenance; but it nevertheless develops each single muscle of the body to such a degree as to secure perfect equilibrium, perfect co-operation of the several powers, so that the gymnast does many things with ease, which even a strong but untrained man can accomplish only with great difficulty, or not at all. The present method has this additional similarity to gymnastics, that it is really profitable only when applied in moderation and with slow motions. For gymnastic exercise

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develops and strengthens the muscles, promoting health and giving great certainty in all movements; but as soon as it is practised beyond a certain wholesome limit, exhaustion and relaxation result, often rendering its discontinuance necessary.

The method I lay down, in conjunction with the practice of the "Daily Studies" by Tausig-Ehrlich, strengthens the fingers and wrist in the highest degree, but this kind of practice should not exceed 5 to 8 minutes at first, afterwards say 10 to 15, perhaps three times daily; otherwise, especially in the beginning, before the hands and fingers are used to the method, the pupil will become so exhausted that he may even have to give up playing for some time.

In order to acquaint himself with the physiological explanation for the peculiar consequences of his method, namely, the great fatigue at first, the unfailing success in a short time, the author applied to Professor Kronecker, director of a physiological department in the Royal University of Berlin, and Dr. Remak, private tutor in the University, requesting them to favor him with their views on the subject. They kindly gave him the information, that the movements of the muscles of the arms, wrist and fingers (like the movements of all joints) are most extraordinarily complex. Dr. Remak demonstrated to the author how every movement of a joint is dependent on the appropriate co-operation of several muscles; furthermore, this co-operation has for its result not only that movement which outwardly appears as the one intended, but also (in the interior structure of the muscles) movements in a direction contrary to those that appear outwardly. Thus, when the pianist merely raises his finger for

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the stroke, he sets in motion not only that muscle which stretches the finger-joint nearest to the hand, but also a series of other muscles which act partly in contrary motion. An enumeration and description, however incomplete, of all the muscles brought into action in piano-playing, would occupy too much space, and does not come within the scope of this work. The author will, therefore, confine himself to explaining why the particular position of the upper arm which his method prescribes produces results so extraordinary.

In piano-playing the upper arm is in so far active, that it keeps the elbow in position. But the exact and steady control of the position of the elbow and the forearm does not by any means proceed from the mere will of the player, but is the result of long habit, practice, and great watchfulness on the part of both teacher and pupil.

Holding the upper arm *free*, as recommended — and, at the proper time, quite rightly — to pianists, is, especially in the first years of study, often detrimental to a correct position of the fingers, hand and wrist, as it induces obliquity of the forearm, a bad position of the hand, and an uneven raising and lowering of the wrist — *faults* which would *escape the pupil's notice*. Such faults are, however, rendered impossible if the upper arm is, *during practice*, for a short time robbed, as it were, of its freedom of motion, and forced to maintain a fixed position. Through the contraction hereby imposed upon a part of the muscles of the upper arm, the movement of the flexors of the upper arm is also in great part prevented; the player is forced to give up the oscillating motions of the elbow, and to move only the wrist or the fingers, as may be required. That the upper arm can be

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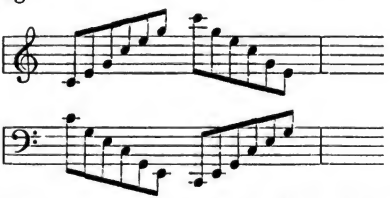
kept inactive for a considerable time, the player will best realize by pressing that member tight to the body, *holding the elbow not against the side, but more to the front*, and playing the following:



The contrary motion of the hands does not prevent the upper arms from retaining their position. Only when the passage is *extended* upward and downward, must the upper arms be freed from restraint.

From these considerations, it will be evident to the reader that the chief aim in developing mechanical skill in piano-playing must be, at the outset, to reduce to a minimum the motions of the upper and forearm, and to concentrate activity in the fingers, hand and wrist; to look after the right position of the fingers, hand and wrist, and that of the arm *at the same time*, is for pupils of the middle stage a very difficult task, seldom perfectly accomplished, and only after a long time and great painstaking. The incorrect position of the fingers, now too straight and again too much bent, causing them to touch the keys either with the middle joint, or with the nails; the turning the elbow outward, by which the position of the hand is changed every instant; the drawing the forearm forward and back, whereby the wrist is prevented from being quiet and from ever attaining to even and

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regular motion; the pushing with the upper arm, which places the hand either too far back on the keyboard or too far forward; — all these are drawbacks which every one would like to be able to remove. The method now under discussion enables the pupil *in a short time* to master the chief difficulties, *to escape the danger of contracting* most of the aforesaid bad habits, and to acquire easy and sure control, during practice, over the position of the hand, wrist and arm. The extremely simple basis of this method is this, that in slowly practising all the passages that are to be played with the hand at rest, and all those in which the wrist comes in motion, but especially in practising the "Tausig-Ehrlich Daily Studies," the upper arm should be held against, or as close as possible to, the front of the body. That this position of the upper arm is not to be rigorously observed in playing pieces more rapidly, must be stated emphatically, to avoid all misunderstanding; but experience will teach that strength will be developed in quite another way, even in more rapid playing. In order to give the arm, and thereby the fingers and wrist, the best position at the present stage, and at the same time to *exercise the most perfect control over all their movements*, the following directions should be observed.

First, lay the fingers of both hands *flat* on the keys *c e g a c*,[1] yet so that the round, fleshy part of the finger tips, but by no means the *nail*, touches the keys. The *thumb*, of course, does not lie perfectly *flat* on its key, but is turned edgeways. The fingers having been thus set on the keys, the

[1] Smaller hands will have to take *c d e f g*, and here the thumbs of both hands will, of course, lie more with the outer edge on the keys.

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upper arms are to be moved toward the body so as to closely press it *with the elbows;* the elbows, however, must lie, not *beside* but *before* the body, the forearm remaining extended *in front of the body*, and planted on the ribs. The player must, accordingly, sit perfectly upright.[1] The teacher will do well to press, during some lessons, the pupil's upper arm (holding it precisely where the elbow lies) firmly against the body; be it well observed, the elbow's place on the body is *in front;* for if it be held further back, the arm loses part of its strength. In the very act of moving the arms close to the body, the fingers *must* take the right position on the keys; it is *impossible* to hold the hands sideways, or for the fingers not to lie immediately over the keys, unless the forearm also is moved sideways; hence, the moment the upper arm is pressed against the body, the position of wrist and hand is emphatically a *compulsorily correct one.* It remains only to give the fingers, holding *c e g a c*, the proper position, as prescribed by all schools. They should, *while firmly standing on the keys*, be slowly *bent* as far as is practicable, the *fleshy tip* of each finger resting on the key. This bending *cannot* be carried to excess, since the elbows form the natural impediment, and would, *at the moment* of bending the fingers too much, *retreat behind the body.* Hence, the position of the upper and forearm, as above indicated, constitutes an *infallible basis* of self-control for the proper position of the

[1] Nearsighted persons should wear spectacles, in order to prevent bending the body forward, and the consequent retreating of the elbow. The spectacles should be so focussed, that the player, when sitting upright, can see the notes distinctly. The wearing of such spectacles is absolutely essential to prevent an incorrect position of the arm and hand; and a good optician should be consulted.

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fingers, hand and wrist. No one can, after a few days' application of this method, hold the fingers, the hand and the wrist higher than they can be raised of themselves, *i.e.*, without at the same time raising the arm; both extremes, that of too high and of too low, are absolutely avoided. Besides these advantages, which are not fully recognized by the pupil till after some time, this method also develops in the highest degree the strength of the fingers and wrist, by concentrating power upon them. This is best demonstrated by means of examples. We will begin with the simplest finger-motions. The pupil, we will suppose, strikes the tones *c*♯ *d*♯ *e*♯ *f*♯ *g*♯, each one five or six times alone, quite powerfully, with both hands, ascending and descending, observing meanwhile the prescribed position of the upper arm. At the first attempts the fingers will perhaps still *press* the keys down, instead of *raising* themselves and then falling and *striking* in hammer-fashion; but after a few minutes the fingers will rise automatically in the proper way; and if the pupil will take care — it is not difficult to remember — to have the *fleshy* finger-tip always fall straight on the key, he will in a few days acquire the true touch, which is, of course, also attainable by other methods, but only after much time, with greater pains, and with the closest attention exerted *in many directions*, whereas in the method here laid down it is only necessary to attend to the *finger-tips*, — for the position of the upper arm is, after from five to eight trials, perfectly assured.

The above exercise for the five fingers will be most profitably practised *in tonalities having many black keys*, as a full stroke is more difficult on the latter than on the white keys.

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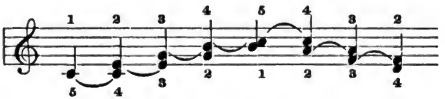
We here insert an additional exercise which the author has recently introduced, with great success, as a preparatory exercise for all kinds of piano-practice. Before practising any difficult passage, the pupil should execute the following exercise with both hands:



In so doing, strictly observe the following directions:—Each finger must at first be stretched out horizontally to its full length, and then, before striking the key, slowly bent and held suspended over the latter. The finger should, therefore, not bend and then immediately strike the key, but must remain lifted, after bending, above the key, and then strike it. This exercise can be most precisely executed when the pupil counts *one! two! three!*—at *one* extending the finger slowly and completely, at *two* bending it and holding it lifted over the key, and at *three* striking. The slower the movements, the greater their effect. The author can give positive assurance, from experience, that this exercise is one of the most effective of all, promoting strength and lightness of touch in a surprising manner. It should, of course, be executed, as a preliminary exercise to any given passage, in the same key as that passage. Also carefully observe the rule, that the finger should strike with the fleshy tip, and never with the nail, and should hold the key down until the next finger has struck its key.

Players having large hands frequently bend the tip-joint

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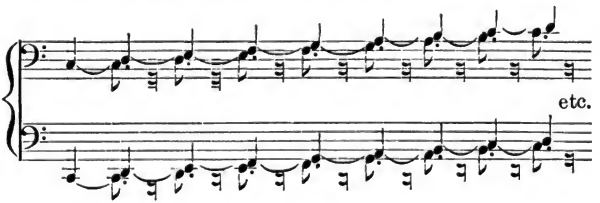
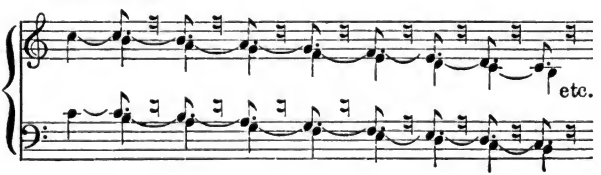
of the finger too much, and strike the key with the nail. To avoid this, they should bend the middle joint considerably less, in order to insure the striking of the key with the fleshy tip alone. The teacher has to bestow even greater attention on the position of elbow and wrist, in the case of players with large hands, than when the pupil's hands are small, because the mere circumstance of having small hands often forces the pupil to assume the correct position.

After these perfectly simple bendings and movements of the fingers have been practised a few days three or four times daily, from three to five minutes at a time, I would advise that the pupil proceed at once to the practice of the scales, *in a compass of two octaves*, the *right hand* beginning on *c* of the *Small Octave*, and no finger being raised from its key till the next one is lying full on *its* key, thus:



Descending:



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In this exercise the *striking* finger must be raised *as high as possible* (while the other remains down), and must fall quite forcibly with its fleshy tip on the key; the upper arm is, of course, held close to the body. The reason why I insist upon keeping one finger down, is *very* important. The *striking* finger must be raised high, in order to fall full and strongly upon the key, *yet without at the same time raising the wrist*, of which there is danger. The wrist should remain inactive, the power of the *fingers only* being exerted; and, to insure this, the finger which had the last tone remains down. The next finger may then lift itself as high as it will, the wrist is forced to remain quiet, as the finger which is down, together with the elbow resting on the body, prevents its rising. By this exercise it is made clear that the very best *legato* may be acquired without in the least changing the position of the hand; in the ascending scale the 3d or 4th finger of the right hand, being forced to remain down while the thumb strikes the tone next above, thereby forms an arch, under which the thumb reaches its key quite easily, without at all changing the position of the hand; in descending, the 3d and 4th fingers do the *curving* over the thumb, which is kept down. What is here said of the right hand, applies to the left also, with the difference that in the latter the *arches* are formed in *descending*, the *curvings* in *ascending*. The author must again call attention to two important points; first, that *only slow* and very careful practice affords real profit; secondly, that we are concerned only with a kind of *gymnastic exercise*, by no means with an absolute system applicable to all cases.

He who has for some weeks practised the scales in the

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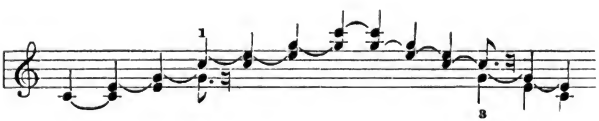
manner here recommended, *very slowly*, and with the prescribed position of the upper arm and the elbow, will be able to play them in any other way, according to any other directions, with greater rapidity and certainty; just as the gymnast, who, from having been accustomed to lift the heavy dumb-bells toward right and left, not suddenly but *slowly*, is able later to lift much heavier weights, when accompanying the action with a slight swing of the arm; and whoever practises the scales slowly, tolerably *legato* and evenly, with the upper arm in the prescribed position, will be able to play them with free arms in the most rapid tempo, and with perfect correctness, and this after only half the time given to practice which would have been requisite had he not adopted this method.

After the scales have been practised in this way for some time, it is proper to proceed to *Broken Chords* (Arpeggios), *and at the same time* to attack some *wrist-exercises.* Broken chords are to be practised in the same way as the scales, *i.e.*, one key must be held down while the next finger raises itself for the stroke, then falls forcibly with the fleshy tip on the key; thus:



Here the pupil will meet with some difficulties. It is impossible for a player with small hands, and difficult even for one with long but untrained fingers, to keep the upper arm

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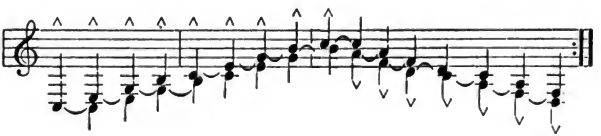
close to the body and at the same time to play a broken chord *slowly* in the way indicated above. The forearm, and with it the elbow, will necessarily take a somewhat slanting position, thereby removing the upper arm from its close proximity to the body. It is much easier to retain this proximity of the upper arm in playing broken chords *rapidly*, when of course the *holding down the key* must be given up. The author recommends the following exercise at the beginning:



because in it the stretches are not so wide, and *all* the fingers are brought into action.

It is indisputably easier to execute the *legato* in broken chords (and even in scales) if the hands, when the thumb passes over, are turned towards right and left, the elbows outward. This ease and certainty however, last *only* as long as the passages concerned are played *piano* or *mezzo forte*. But to play a broken chord, a running passage formed from a broken chord, or a scale, ascending with the right hand, descending with the left, *loud*, or *very loud*, at the same time holding the elbows turned outward, is almost as impracticable as to give a blow with clinched fist without keeping the upper arm and the elbow close to the body.

Let the following be attempted:

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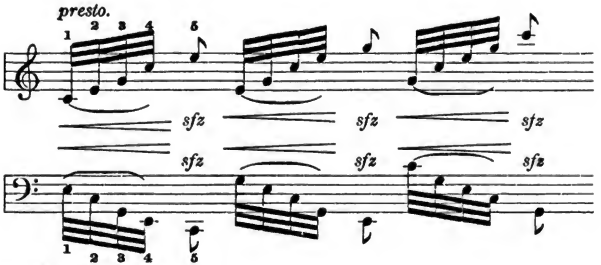

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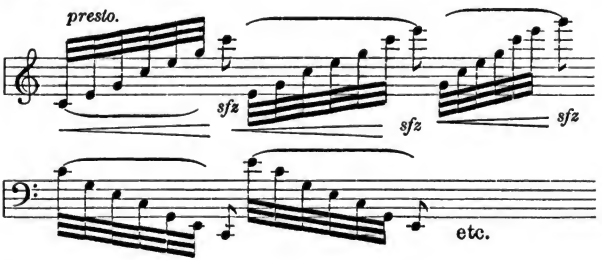
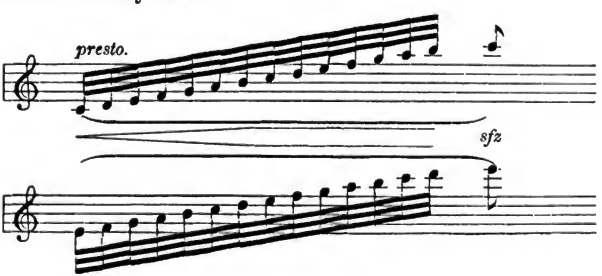


or even merely this:



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playing in the left hand in contrary motion and keeping the elbows *turned outward*, and it will at once be seen, that the strength of the fingers decreases as they get higher or lower. Then play the same passages, keeping the elbows as close to the body as possible, and in front of it, and it will be evident that the strength increases the more the hands move away from the central point, and the more the upper arm can support this outward movement. The author believes that he can, without great presumption, recommend his method of *practising* chords as suitable for *every kind* of execution — for *piano* and *forte;* doubtless (as he observed at the very outset) it offers difficulties, especially for small hands, *and a perfectly close position of the upper arm to the body in playing broken chords slowly is not possible.* As a set-off against its difficulties, the method offers the very important advantage, that the elasticity of the separate fingers is more decidedly developed than in any other system. Be it well understood, we are always presupposing *slow* practice! Whoever has been accustomed to *this* for some time, will thenceforth be able to see his way clear under all circumstances.

Still more beneficial is the close position of the upper arm in *wrist-exercises*, which it is earnestly recommended to take up simultaneously with broken chords, both, of course, in *very great moderation*, lest the pupil become too much fatigued. A beginning should be made with octaves repeated on the same keys,

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in both hands, *very slow;* the wrist must be raised each time as high as possible, the elbow *close* to the body, and *in front;* the fingers, including the thumb, must fall with the fleshy tip on the keys. In the first minute, many trying it for the first time will deem it impossible to play an octave from the wrist without at the same time moving the forearm a little; but on resuming the exercise after a short interruption, even those least accustomed to it and most mistrustful will be convinced, that the hand moves in its joint quite easily without any raising of the forearm, and that the difficulty lies rather in keeping the upper arm in position. Moreover, every imperfectly trained pianist will have an experience which ought to convince him of the correctness of this method; namely, if the elbow lies against the body, *in front*, the forearm will, at the first attempts at wrist-exercises in octaves and chords, *move sympathetically*, *i.e.*, raise itself, yet after some minutes it is so exhausted that the wrist alone will move. The forearm cannot, in fact, in that position long continue in motion, and is forced to remain at rest.

After the first wrist-exercises on the octave *c*, it is advisable to practise the same motion on octaves with *black keys*, and then to proceed chromatically, thus: *c*, $c^{\sharp}_{\natural}$, *d*, $d^{\sharp}_{\natural}$, *e*, *f*, etc., striking each octave from 5 to 6 times with the fleshy tip of the finger. It is strongly recommended even in these beginnings to use the *4th finger* on black keys, — it will be explained later why this usage is based on the structure of the hand. After octaves on the same tones have been practised for some time, as directed, alternating with broken chords, the *Scales in Octaves* may be begun. Only a *very slow tempo*, however, insures the perfectly uniform raising and lowering

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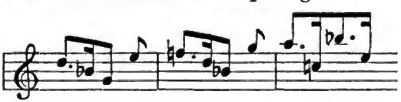
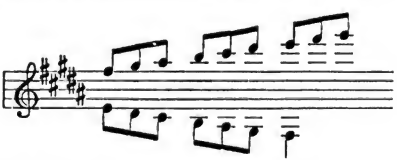
of the wrist, together with a uniform strength of stroke. The author knows by his own experience and that of many pupils, that uncertainty in octave-passages is often owing, not to insufficient practice, but to want of uniformity of wrist-motion, consequently of touch; and that *very slow practice*, with the upper and lower arm perfectly still, far more speedily insures unerring execution even in rapid tempo, than much longer practice according to some other method, in which the raising and lowering of the wrist cannot be so *forcedly* uniform as in the author's method. He has, especially of late, obtained surprising results with pupils who had previously greatly fatigued themselves over difficult passages. One could not play with confidence the octave-passage in Schumann's Novellette in *E* major; another found insurmountable difficulties in the octave-skips for both hands in the Trio (in *D* major) of the *f*♯ minor Novellette, in this passage:



etc.;

a third struggled in vain with the octave-passage in contrary motion in Liszt's transcription of the Tannhäuser-March:



etc.;

The author had these passages practised in his presence *very slowly*, some 10 or 12 times, at first holding the pupil's

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elbows close to the body, but after the fifth time allowing him to exert his own strength. This procedure was successful, even in the Tannhäuser-passage above cited, with both hands;[1] after the pupils had practised in this way three times, with short interruptions, and had thus gone over the passage some 30 or 36 times, they were able, by allowing only a little more freedom to the forearm, immediately to execute the passages in question in considerably quicker time and with certainty, which they had never before accomplished after practising almost a hundred times with great care, but without system, at home.

The whole secret of this rapid success lay in the circumstance, that by holding the upper and lower arm as directed, the *wrist alone* was brought into action and was forced to raise and lower itself *uniformly*. For the chief fault of most pupils in executing octave-passages and chord-successions in *staccato* or *portamento*, consists in *unconsciously* uneven wrist-motion; they endeavor, it is true, to avoid raising the forearm and the wrist at once, but it escapes them that they sometimes *do not at all raise* the arm and the wrist, merely *pressing down*, instead of *striking*, the octaves or chords, *at the same time generally pushing the arm forward.* This fault is impossible in the method now under consideration. The method is undeniably *difficult in wrist-exercises*, and should be applied only with *great moderation* and in *slow* tempo; but the author has found it infallible, and productive of surprisingly quick results; and he confidently invites teachers to give it a trial, especially as it does not combat any other method, but is only a supplement to all.

[1] Short arms are, of course, not expected to remain perfectly close to the body, from the upper c♯ upward.

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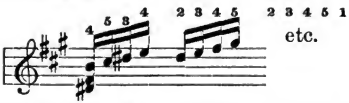
Whoever has for some time practised this method (how to properly apply it and teach it to others, will be considered further on), will often find with remarkable readiness the best way of *fingering passages*, even the most difficult. If a trained pianist who has not yet applied the method will take the trouble to hold the upper arm as directed, and attempt the following passages, the fingering of which generally offers considerable difficulty, he will at once see how much easier the author's fingering is. Let us take this passage in the 3d variation of the *Andante* of Beethoven's Grand Sonata in *f* minor:

holding the hand somewhat forward towards the fall-board, and it will soon be clear that the above fingering is, with the hand *perfectly at rest*, the easiest. In the Sonata in A major, Op. 101, in the passage



the author fingers as above indicated, and many of his pupils, who found this at first impracticable, and to whom he had then given liberty to find a better fingering, finally recognized his as the safest and easiest. Likewise in Mendelssohn's Song without Words, No. 11, which may also be regarded as an excellent exercise for the left hand, the author finds that his peculiar fingering at the end of the first division:

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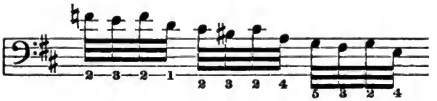

is the surest for obtaining a good *legato* from his pupils, when they hold the upper arm near to the body. In many a Fugue and Partita of Bach he has found fingerings, by means of his method, which greatly facilitate difficult passages; also in the G major Nocturne and the A♭ major Ballade of Chopin; and after a trial of all other fingerings he feels he can say without presumption that his may be classed among the safest and least difficult. It often happens, too, that a fingering which at first seemed the most awkward, after it had been practised and then compared with others, seemingly less awkward and difficult, turns out to be the safest after all, as involving the least risk of missing, playing wrong notes, etc., precisely because it keeps the position of the hand unchanged. Of course, original fingering is the *last* stage of the present method, and possible to *him only* who by frequent practice and use of the method has made it his own, and is perfectly certain of holding his arms in the proper position.

But the road to this certainty is comparatively short and, though difficult, with some attention is infallible; and the author takes the liberty again to precisely indicate this road, which leads to the desired goal without superseding any other method, unless it be an intrinsically wrong one. Gymnastic exercise, when cultivated with due moderation, has never yet spoiled a man's bodily carriage when good, though it has improved it when bad.

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Every one who wishes to follow the method here laid down, should for 8 or 10 days practise very slowly the preceding separate finger-exercises, scales, broken chords and octaves, in the proper order, at first not longer than from 2 to 5 minutes at most, four or five times daily. The chief point is, that the upper and forearm get accustomed to their position, and that the keys be boldly struck by the fleshy finger-tip. After 8 or 10 days these exercises may be practised longer, or — which is much more profitable — *oftener*, say 6 to 8 times daily, always from 4 to 6 minutes at a time. For the rest, the pupil may practise his *pieces*, just as before, according to his teacher's method; but the author would venture to suggest that the pupil, *when slowly practising a passage, not when executing it in the proper tempo*, should keep the upper arm, if not exactly against, yet as near to the body as possible. The development of strength necessarily resulting from this, re-acts most beneficially on the independence of the fingers. After two weeks of such preparation by means of the simple exercises, the pupil should pass on to the "Tausig-Ehrlich Daily Studies;" these must absolutely be played according to the method, with the upper arm in its close position, the elbows firmly planted in front of the body, and in very slow tempo, which may be *somewhat* accelerated only after long practice. Each tone must be struck full with raised finger. These "Daily Studies" should not — especially in the beginning — be practised longer than 5, then 8, and at the longest 10 minutes successively, otherwise they fatigue, relax, and strain the hand too much; they may, however, and should, be taken up often through the day, just as the gymnast takes in his

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hand the dumb-bells to exercise and strengthen the muscles of his arms and wrists, taking good care not to exceed at one time a strictly prescribed limit. The author's opinion is, that the longest practice should last 10, 15 or 20 minutes; it can, however, be taken up — according to the player's usage and strength — three, four, or even five times a day. This, however, by no means implies that at each resumption of practice the *self-same exercise* should always be taken up; it must be evident to all that expenditure of strength on a variety of objects is less fatiguing than when concentrated on one single point.

From the moment that the "Tausig-Ehrlich Daily Studies" are attacked, it is also recommended that the pupil — *with permission of his teacher* — practise the difficult passages of the pieces which he is studying ten or twelve times very slowly and with a vigorous touch, with the upper arm close to the body and the elbows before the body, and then again attempt them, each time *with the arm free;* he will soon be convinced that he has gained greater certainty, repose and power in the execution. Of course, patience and perseverance are necessary, for the fatigue is at first not trifling, and many a player will for some days complain of stiff fingers, just as the gymnast after the first exercises feels an unpleasant stretching and drawing in all his limbs; but in both cases the beneficial results will soon be evident, and enjoyment will increase with the progress made. This progress will, of course, show itself sooner in some than in others, for there is undoubtedly a special talent for the purely mechanical and technical as well as for the intellectual. No one will deny that Tausig's infallible technique

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was the result not merely of constant practice, but, for the most part, of peculiar talents; these talents were, it is true, developed to the utmost by untiring diligence, but it is equally true that another pianist could never, even with twelve hours' daily practice, attain to this technique without being gifted, like Tausig, with a special talent in this direction, without uniting to perfect mechanism a feeling for clearness and rhythmics. But even purely *mechanical* excellence, which might seem the result of practice, is often due to special talent. Willmer's trill, Dreyschock's octave-passages and pearly runs, the indefatigable endurance and power of the recent phenomenon, Herr Zarembski — the author expressly names three piano-virtuosi with whose musical method he is far from sympathizing — were and are special achievements, due to a particular gift, which should, however, not be overrated.

The author can testify from experience that even such pupils as had but little talent for technique, after patiently practising for some time according to the method here explained, all at once showed comparatively sudden progress; while, on the other hand, those whose organization (structure of the fingers and wrist) facilitated the mastery over technical difficulties, acquired in a short time a much more vigorous touch and greater certainty in passages of every kind.

The author confidently recommends his method to the favorable consideration of teachers, and to amateurs for self-instruction, with the following observations, which will certainly win the approval of all intelligent persons.

In our time the *mechanical* part of piano-playing, *i.e.*, mere isolated passage-work, having nothing in common with Touch,

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Rhythmics, variety of Tone-color, that is, with the technical part properly so called, has had an enormous development. To say nothing of the modern virtuoso-composers — the Herzes and Kalkbrenners, and others, who in their "Fantaisies" (without fancy) make great demands on the player, or of the as yet unequalled master of the piano, Franz Liszt, who, in his Concert-pieces and Studies, requires the "transcendental," — even Beethoven in his last Sonatas, then Schumann and Chopin, and now Brahms, Kiel, Kirchner, and others, present in their works the most difficult combinations of runs, trills, double-notes, chord-successions in rapid tempo and octave-passages, the mastery of which is the more laborious from the fact that the effect depends, not only on the technique, but equally on the delivery, the spiritual vivification of the passages. Now, it is not necessary to demonstrate by prolix argumentation that by far the greater number of young pianists make the greatest account of the technique and devote most time to it. Hereby attention is withdrawn from the spiritual conception and the delivery. On the other hand, to be sure, it also happens that many a pupil devotes his attention chiefly to the latter, and neglects the technique, which thus remains faulty. It is very seldom the case that the mechanical part, the technique, and the delivery, are maintained by the pupil in equilibrium, and it may be asserted that *this* case is chiefly the result of extraordinary talent, implying that the pupil has a quick perception and a lively imagination, and hence can afford to devote, without detriment to the delivery, a great deal of time to the technical part. The author sets out from the conviction that an equilibrium between the purely mechanical exercises and

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those studies which develop technique and delivery — the *musical* element — is best established by assigning to the mechanical part *little*, but that *difficult*, and to the *musical* part, on the contrary, *much*. The mechanical exercises, he thinks, should be so adapted as to require great exertion and *with but moderate practice* develop strength in every direction; while, on the other hand, *so much the more time and attention* should be given to those exercises which promote a thorough knowledge of rhythmics, which perfect the touch, kindle and musically refine the imagination, cultivate the sense of form, quicken the perception, facilitate the recognition of the various tone-forms, and educate the mind to a correct appreciation of the master-works of musical art. Hence, as soon as the pupil has reached the middle stage, and — for instance — is ready to take up the 1st Book of "Cramer's Studies," the method should be, a *few difficult technical* studies (the pupil's strength and abilities determining how often and how long they are to be practised), and *many pieces, not difficult* ones, but such as must and can be played well.

Let no one say, it is dangerous to begin difficult technical studies so early, to weary the pupil and disgust him with the piano and with music generally; that it is necessary rather to begin by awakening in him a sincere love for piano-playing — the rest will come of itself, etc., etc.

He who pursues art seriously, whether as an amateur or professionally, will not shun any difficulty that leads more rapidly to the goal. And the teacher must on his part understand how to foster in the young pupil a love for music, even when giving him many a hard lesson. With regard to the necessity of beginning early with difficult ex-

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ercises, the author would refer to the drill of the Prussian recruits, and to an example from ancient history. Observing how the Prussian recruits learn to march, how they must first raise the leg, with strongly bent knee, very high, and hold it some time in this position, how they then with a jerk stretch out the leg and foot perfectly stiff, hold them so a moment, and then tread on the ground, thus dividing each step into three parts, whereas in ordinary life the practice is merely to raise the foot a little above the ground and then set it down, — observing all this, one might at first judge this method to be more whimsical than useful; indeed many a superficial observer might consider such an exercise as only worrying the poor man for nothing, for "*in actual marching he never uses this kind of step.*" But this very exercise gives the Prussian soldier steadiness and endurance in marching; precisely because he has been required, *practising slowly*, to exert to such a degree the power of all the muscles of the leg, he is able later, in more rapid movement, to overcome with so much greater ease the difficulties of a long and fatiguing march. So, too, did many a Roman soldier, before going into battle, bind metallic soles under his sandals, in order that the march, when begun, might seem rather a relief. In the same way, when the pianist applies in his *slow practice* the most difficult method, requiring the exertion and concentration of his strength, he will strengthen, in a high degree, the muscles of his fingers, and in playing overcome all difficulties with greater certainty and ease. For indolent or weakly students of music this method is, of course, not adapted; perseverance and a certain amount of strength are now-a-days necessary to every one who desires to carry piano-

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playing beyond mediocrity. Nevertheless, that perseverance and earnest striving accomplish more than strength alone, has been proved by the great artists Bülow and Tausig, who with slight bodily frame and small hands have done such wonderful things.

For becoming thoroughly conversant with this method in a short time with the most favorable results, the "Tausig-Ehrlich Daily Studies" are indispensable, as offering the greatest number of entirely original mechanical exercises of every kind, and containing, so to speak, a complete course of piano-gymnastics. In view of the universal and unlimited approbation of these exercises by the most eminent and competent authorities representing the various schools, the author ventures to assert, that they form the most useful basis of that system which by difficult exercises of short duration leads to a rapid and general development of technique, and allows so much the more time and attention to be devoted to strictly musical, artistic culture. In order that these exercises may be practised exactly in the spirit of Tausig and according to the intentions of the author of this little book, who has worked out and arranged the exercises from sketches and made some not altogether unimportant additions, there follow precise directions for each separate number.

The author at the same time takes the liberty to suggest, out of his own experience, to teachers who make use of the "Daily Exercises" for their pupils, that they should not strictly follow the order prescribed, but have their pupils practise at the same time a variety of exercises having different aims. The order of arrangement is for the sake of *system; study* must be regulated according to *individual*

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capacity. For some pupils, especially the advanced, exercises on stretches, or in broken chords, especially the double-note and wrist-exercises in Book II., are advisable immediately after the first three lessons. Here the teacher must, of course, decide what is most proper. Students who are *far advanced*, will best judge for themselves what they require.

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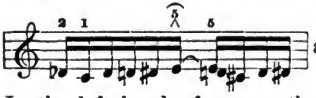
DIRECTIONS FOR PRACTISING THE "TAUSIG-EHRLICH DAILY STUDIES."

BOOK I.

THE author recommends that Exercise No. 9 be taken up first of all, each separate tone being struck not only twice, as written, but 8 or 10 times. Observe well that each finger should be raised as high as possible, and then fall on the key with full force, and with the fleshy tip. *The wrist must be held motionless, almost rigid*, upper arm and elbow close to the body. After this, Exercise No. 1 should be taken up, and thereafter the rest in regular order.

No. 1. — To be played with great distinctness, so that each tone be heard separated from the other.

No. 2. — Play in $\frac{3}{8}$ time, raising the fingers high; let the 5th finger in ascending, and the thumb in descending, always *remain down* till the next tone is struck. Thus:



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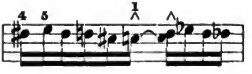
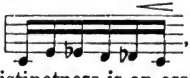


In the left hand, of course, the thumb remains down in ascending, the 5th finger in descending.

No. 3. — To be played in exactly the same way as No. 2.

No. 4. — Likewise $\frac{3}{8}$. The last three notes of each group *crescendo*,



, and similarly in descending. Perfect distinctness is an essential condition.

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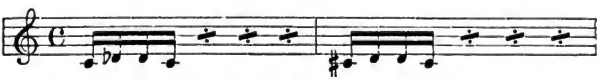
No. 5. — Slow and loud; the first note for the 2d finger must be struck powerfully, and not shortened.

No. 6. — The last three notes of each group somewhat *crescendo.*

No. 7. — Slow, loud, the quarter-notes strongly accented; the whole force must proceed from the fingers, the hand to be kept perfectly quiet and not to add the slightest pressure.

No. 8. — Raise the fingers high without the aid of the wrist, and let them fall hammer-fashion. The exercise is, after frequent slow practice, also to be played in quicker tempo, when the *wrist* will come a little into play.



No. 9. — Already spoken of.

Nos. 10 and **11.** — The groups perfectly uniform, the first note not to be shortened, but rather to be played with a very slight accent.

No. 12. — Perfectly uniform; here no note is to be made prominent above another.

No. 13. — In both hands hold the first note (*g*, right hand, *c*, left hand) as a *half-note.* Also play the exercise in *contrary motion*, the right hand taking the notes of the left hand, and *vice versa.*

No. 14. — The 4th, 3d, and 2d fingers should, being kept perfectly rigid and half-bent, glide one after the other, thus holding the key as firmly as possible; let the fingers fall powerfully on the fleshy tip; keep the arms perfectly quiet.

No. 15. — This exercise is to be played fast, yet with the greatest distinctness on the part of the 4th and 5th fingers.

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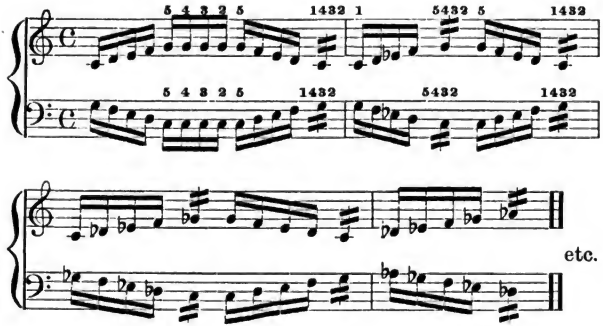
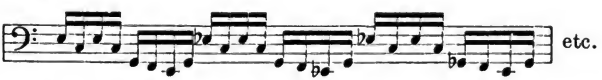


No. 16. — The main point of these exercises consists in the stretch from the 2d to the 3d finger. Do not, therefore, *spring* from one tone to another, but play *legato*, slowly, leaving the 2d finger down till the 3d has struck.

To attain perfect uniformity of both hands in this exercise, play it in the left hand thus:



No. 17. — To be played slow, with heavy stroke on each tone. Beware of letting the tones run into each other; each one must be heard distinctly, perfect in itself. *The left hand plays two octaves lower, that the two thumbs may not collide.*

No. 18. — An essential condition here, as also in

Nos. 19, 20, and **21,** — is, that the finger which holds the quarter-note should be raised, not *at* the fourth sixteenth-note, but *after* it. Hence a slow tempo must be observed, in

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which it is much more difficult to perform the exercise well, than in quick tempo, in which the holding-on till *after* the fourth sixteenth would be impracticable.

No. 22. — This exercise is likewise to be played slowly, each separate note to be powerfully struck; the half-notes must be strictly held.

The author feels bound to observe here, that the exercises should invariably be played in all the keys, in order to produce really satisfactory results.

It is only by being forced to move with certainty in all directions that the fingers obtain that elasticity and muscular power which the mechanical part of modern piano-playing demands. But, as it would consume much time and cause fatigue to practise every exercise in all the keys, consecutively, they should be played the first time in 4 keys, *c*, *c*♯, *d*, *e*♭, the second time in *e*, *f*, *f*♯, *g*, the third in *a*♭, *a*, *b*♭, *b*. When the pupil has gone once through all the keys, he can select those which he has found most difficult. *Transposition* may at first be found troublesome; but now-a-days every one who studies music as a profession must transpose. Amateurs who practise these exercises, may avoid the drudgery of transposing by having them written out in the different keys by a copyist. At any rate, it is indispensable, we repeat, to practise in all the keys, and the lamented Tausig regarded this as the chief basis of his system. His idea was, it is true, to begin with the most difficult keys, but the author deems it better for the sake of unity to start from C major.

No. 23. — This exercise is most generally quite wrongly conceived and practised. All pupils play it with an accent of the hand, even, if possible, with a push of the arm. This

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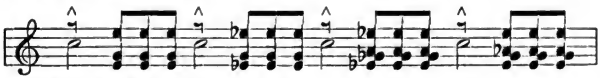
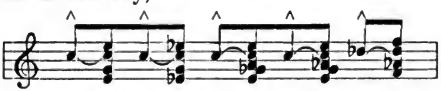
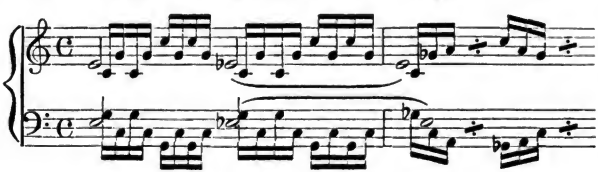
is all wrong. The author cannot better indicate the correct execution than by advising the pupil first to play the exercise very slowly as follows,



and then in this way,



with the accent, that is, on the first note; *only the fingers* may move and by their own strength strike the keys; *the palm of the hand should be perfectly quiet, and must not give emphasis to the fingers.* When the above preparatory exercise has been practised for some time with great exactness and very slowly, the pupil may play the first note — the appoggiatura — always faster and faster with a sharp accent, being very watchful that the hand does not fall. This is best prevented by holding the elbows as close to the body — in front — as possible. As many pupils, despite our repeated caution not to let the hand sink after the finger-stroke, nevertheless move the arm and hand, I have introduced the following variant, which, though difficult, leads most surely to complete independence and repose of the fingers:



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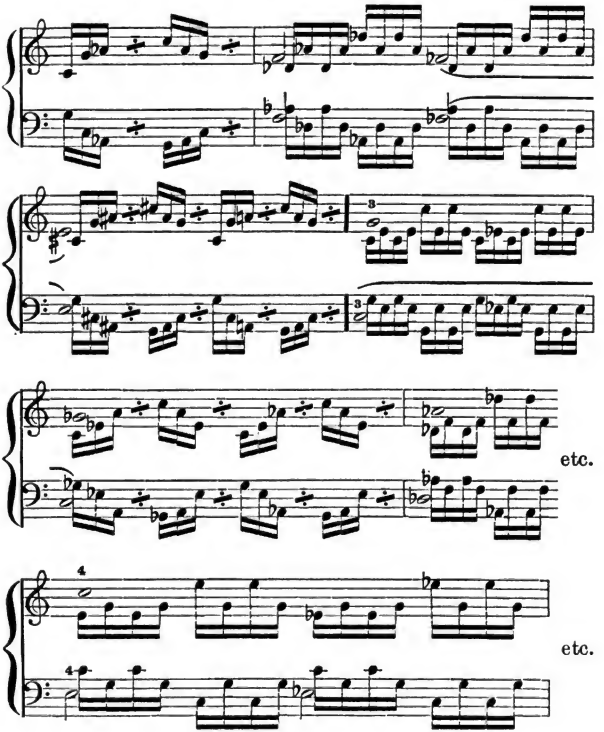

No. 24. — This exercise, which the author of this work invented ten years ago for his own use, and through which Tausig was primarily induced to confide to him a share in

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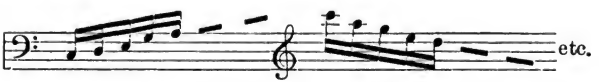
the work, and afterwards its entire elaboration, is very difficult, and many a stretch is impracticable for small hands if the half-note be held strictly. This exercise is also fatiguing, and should at first be played perhaps in only two major and two minor keys, always alternating from one to the other. The main point is the perfectly *even* execution of the thirty-second notes, which must be played loud and very *legato*. The exercise is to be taken only in moderate tempo.

No. 25. — All these exercises formed from scales are to be practised as indicated in the Introduction; *i.e.*, when the thumb passes under or is passed over, the key previously struck is to be *held* by the respective finger. The exercises may also be extended by variants, such as



The fingering here, especially at the transition to *d♭*, is somewhat awkward.

No. 26. — In this exercise the chief object of attention should be that the tones struck by the 2d and 4th fingers be played perfectly *legato* and quietly. Any tempo may be applied here.

No. 27. — This exercise is one of those which are to be practised only in *moderate tempo;* the *quickest* would be ♩ = 100. For the chief point is the perfect distinctness of the individual notes simultaneously with a perfect *legato*. Here, too, the hand must be kept perfectly quiet, which at first is difficult, especially in passing the thumb under the 2d finger in the minor keys.

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No. 28. — For practising this exercise with the greatest profit, it is advisable to hold in both hands the notes for the thumb and 5th finger as *quarter-notes.*

The left hand plays two octaves lower.

No. 29. — A *crescendo* at

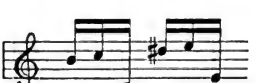
so that the tones struck by the 2d and 4th fingers may sound loud and distinct. The exercise should be practised chiefly in those keys in which the 2d and 4th fingers have to strike black keys.

No. 30. — To be played loud, *the 5th finger well bent.* Any tempo is suitable.

No. 31. — Rather slow. The elbows must lie close, so that in passing the fingers over or under the hand may retain its position unchanged. *Even though the body should follow the motions of the fingers*, the *arms* must remain firm in position. This very useful exercise may, without fatigue, be carried through all the keys at one time.

No. 32. — The main point here is the strengthening of the 3d and 4th fingers. Practise in *three major* and *three minor* keys at a time (major and minor alternately); the exercise is somewhat fatiguing.

No. 33. — The first exercise,



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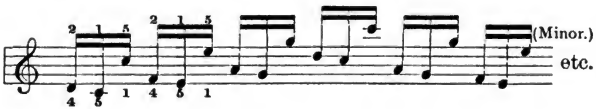
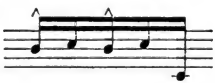
not fast, loud, the octaves not detached but very smoothly connected. The following variant will be found very useful, for the left hand especially:



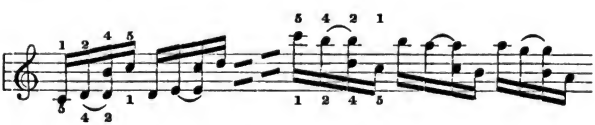
The second exercise



is to be played as fast as possible, but very distinctly and very loud.

No. 34. — *Legatissimo*, loud, not fast.

No. 35. — In tolerably slow tempo, with perfectly quiet hand; the right and the left hand hold firmly the notes struck by the thumb and followed by the skip of a seventh, with a view to perfect *legato*. The left hand plays the exercise two octaves lower. Here is a somewhat difficult but very useful variant:



No. 36. — This exercise is to be played in precisely the same manner as **No. 35**; here too the thumb firmly holds the tone followed by the skip (here that of a sixth). The arms

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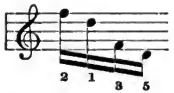
close to the body. The left hand two octaves lower. For the left hand in the first measure take the fingering 3 5 instead of 4 5



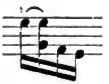
and so on throughout in descending.

No. 37. — This exercise may be taken in any tempo not incompatible with the most perfect repose, certainty and evenness of stroke, and *legatissimo* playing. Not being very fatiguing, it may be carried through all the keys at one time.

No. 38. — To be taken at first very slow, and even after frequent practice not faster than ♩ = 100. Always loud and *legatissimo.* An essential condition is a perfectly uniform *legato* at the places where the fingering is given. To be practised in all keys (always four at a time; see p. 32, No. 22), as often as possible, because the motion of the fingers hereby excited will be of great assistance in executing broken chords.

No. 39. — This exercise also is to be played *legatissimo;*

in ascending, the 3d finger is to be held down,

in descending, the 5th finger 

This exercise is most profitable in tonalities in which the 3d and 5th fingers must often strike black keys.

Nos. 40 and **41** are exercises with the hands in contrary motion; hence the direction that each hand should first prac-

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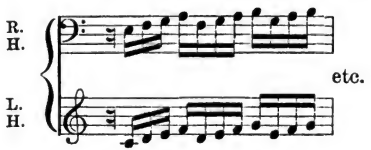
tise its own part separately. The pupil must then aim at the most perfect distinctness and uniformity, in a rapid tempo. The exercise is to be practised *forte*, as well as *piano*.

After these exercises, let the pupil attempt to play the first of Cramer's Studies, in Part I, with his hands crossed, the left hand taking the right-hand part, and *vice versa:*



BOOK II.

No. 1. — The exercise can be played in any tempo; in the left hand two octaves lower.

No. 2. — The chief condition here is that the hand, at the passing-over and under of the finger immediately after or before an octave, shall remain in the same position; hence, the exercise should be played at first very slowly. Players with small hands are advised to hold the hand rather high, so as to facilitate the passing-over and under.

No. 3. — This exercise is one of the most difficult and fatiguing, and at the same time most useful. It is, of course, to be attacked by those players only to whom the other exercises are already tolerably easy, or who, without having

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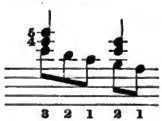
studied special preparatory exercises, have a powerfully built hand and strong fingers. As indicated in the Book itself, the exercise is to be taken *adagio*, and with the fingers lifted high. It is to be practised in those tonalities especially in which black keys often occur. For *small hands* the 1st exercise (on the second brace), marked "Another fingering," is perhaps quite impracticable if the quarter-notes are to be strictly sustained. With this fingering, however,



the exercise may be played without special difficulty. The other difficulties are much less important. The exercise belongs, as has been said, among the best, but it must (like many a gymnastic exercise) be practised quietly and *with great moderation*, till the fingers are so strengthened that they can carry it through six keys without fatigue.

No. 4. — This exercise also — Tausig constructed it for his own use — is difficult and fatiguing, but unsurpassable for strengthening the fingers and rendering them independent. The chief points aimed at are uniformity of stroke and a perfectly smooth connection between the 2d finger and the thumb. It is another of those exercises which are to be played at first in only three keys, for avoiding excessive fatigue.

No. 5. — Here may be applied all that was said concerning No. 23, in Book I; the 4th finger must attack with a rather

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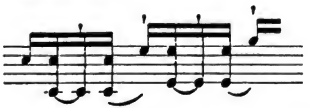
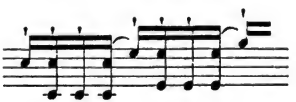
strong accent, bent, and with the fleshy tip; the chord is to be struck with the power of the fingers only, with no aid from the hand.

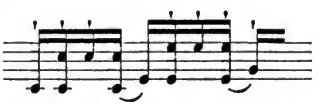
No. 6. — This exercise is to be played in various ways. First, with two ties, thus:



second, connecting only the 4th sixteenth with the following one, the others being played *staccato:*



and third, thus:



In this staccato the wrist comes into play.

No. 7. — This difficult but excellent exercise, which bears eloquent testimony to the genial Brahms' earnestness and thoroughness in whatever he sets about to do, is to be practised with the 3d, 4th and 5th fingers of both hands sharply curved, the thumb remaining, on the contrary, always perfectly extended. In this way alone can the exercise be mastered. It may be taken in any tempo; distinctness is of

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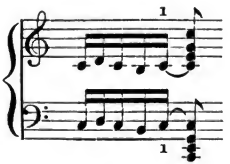
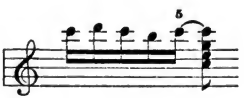
course indispensable. Only a practised and strong player will be able to carry it through more than three or four keys.

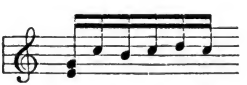
No. 8. — Play *legatissimo*, loud, and separate the single tones one from the other. The surest means of avoiding all unevenness is, at first to keep the thumbs of both hands always down:



and in the *variant* the 5th finger in the right hand, the 4th in the left:



No. 9. — This exercise is perhaps still more useful for strengthening the weaker fingers than the preceding one. It must be practised first by each hand separately, with the arms perfectly close to the body, and — as in No. 8 — keeping down the thumb in the right hand, the 4th finger in the left. Play with powerful stroke. A *most excellent* exercise is, to practise the variant,



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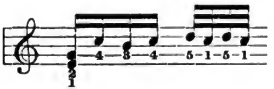
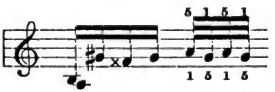
in the following manner in both hands and in *all the keys*,



playing the tones given to 5 1 as a *Trill*, which may be prolonged at option.

In this some very difficult positions will occur, as, for example, at the transition from $a^{\flat}$ to a, —



here the hand is to be kept perfectly quiet — no easy matter even for practised players. The author can give this exercise — which is entirely original with Tausig — as also the Trill-variant above indicated, the strongest recommendation, founded on experience.

Exercises formed from Broken Chords.

Before proceeding to the directions for each separate exercise, the author deems it necessary to repeat with emphasis that precisely these exercises are *all* to be played with the awkward close position of the arms, and that *it is better that the body should follow the movement of the hands*, than that the arms should be freed from their awkward position. Only after long practice can the teacher permit more freedom, or the pupil take upon himself to use it.

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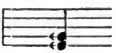
No. 10. — The pupil should lay his hands — extended and with the fingers bent — over the keys to be struck, before beginning. Each tone must then be struck, slow and loud, with a slight accent on the double-notes.

No. 11. — The same way of playing. The accent on the Third must, however, be stronger than in the preceding exercise. The player should take special care that the Thirds always sound perfectly even, full and strong, avoiding the *arpeggiating* way of playing —



into which so many pupils unconsciously fall.

No. 12. — Here, where the 3d and 4th fingers have the Thirds, or Seconds, as the case may be, the directions for Nos. 10 and 11 must be applied with still greater emphasis. *Only* when the double-notes are struck perfectly *full* and *even*, is the aim of the exercise reached.

No. 13. — The same manner of playing. Here, however, special attention should be given to the 4th and 5th fingers, that they remain curved and always strike powerfully with the fleshy tip.

No. 14. — Here each group should be sharply detached; the Sixteenths are to be played with perfect evenness, the first one of a group by no means to be shortened.

Nos. 15 and **16** are exercises which require the fingers to exert all their muscular strength. For the fingers only must strike, and that with full force, the *hand* and the *wrist* not being allowed to add any emphasis to the stroke. For avoiding any such emphasis, the pupil will do best to *hold firmly* the first two tones, thus:

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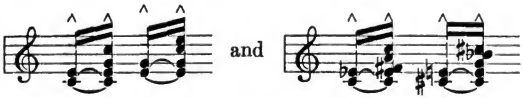
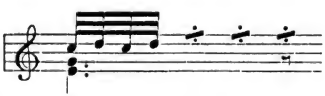


The left hand will here play two octaves lower. Difficult as these exercises are at first, they will in a short time show themselves to be proportionately excellent and beneficial. The player who practises them *slowly*, with *moderation*, and in the manner prescribed, will feel by the end of a week how greatly and rapidly they promote the independence of the fingers and also the power of stroke.

No. 17. — An almost easy exercise, when played in quick tempo, in which the touch is facilitated by the swing of the hand; but difficult and fatiguing when played slowly, so that the fingers must each time strike with full force, unsupported by the swing of the hand; to be practised, therefore, slowly and in moderation until the pupil can play it for a long time without feeling the least fatigue.

Trill-Studies.

Nos. 18a, 18b. — It is to be remarked chiefly that the trills in these two exercises may be extended much further than indicated; *i.e.*, they may be repeated 20 or 30 times:



the player has only to take care, that the hand, in *changing*

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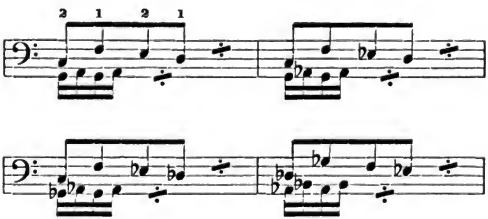
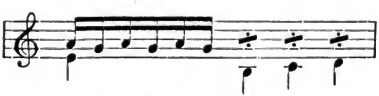
to the next position, remains perfectly quiet. The duration and rapidity of the trill must depend on the pupil's strength and usual practice.

No. 19. — Here a repetition of the trill (in the Sixteenths) would not be expedient; the exercise is to be practised precisely as it stands. The chords are to be played with a perfectly quiet stroke of the fingers, without any aid from the hand. A faster tempo than a moderate *allegro* will be hardly practicable even for a well-trained pianist.

No. 20. — A perfect *legato*, especially in the lower tones (eighths); no finger should be raised before the other strikes its note. The following would be the exercise for the left hand corresponding to that for the right:



This exercise may also be very profitably practised in the following manner, prolonging the trills, —



An excellent *variant* is also this —

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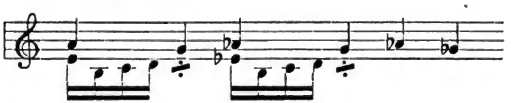
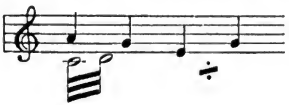
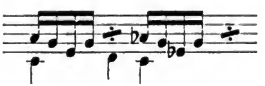


No. 21. — This exercise is less for practice in trills than for that of double-notes; it is difficult, and must be practised very slowly. Here also are two variants applicable with great profit. Extension of the trill:



and



In both cases the quarter-notes should be held strictly.

No. 22. — The directions for Nos. 20 and 21 apply also to this exercise. As an exercise for double-notes it is to be played with the fingers lifted rather high.

Exercises in Double-notes.

The author advises the earnest student to practise, before attacking these exercises, some preparatory exercises in Thirds and Double-notes. Tausig added to his edition of Clementi's "Gradus ad Parnassum" a series of scales in Thirds, with special fingering. Another most excellent exercise, too little known, was published many years ago by Czerny; it forms a complete piece in itself, leading, in continuous passages of Thirds, through all the major and minor keys, and often exhibiting very original combinations. The

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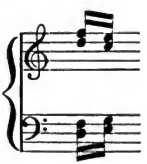
author can conscientiously advise all teachers and students to become acquainted with both the exercises just named, certain that they will find so much the less difficulty in the Tausig-Ehrlich exercises now to be discussed.

No. 23. — This exercise must be practised at first very slowly, with a powerful stroke; the whole note must be sustained till after the last 16th (this of course only in *slow tempo;* in quick tempo the note cannot be held so long). It is very profitable to so extend the trill that each measure may contain 8 quarter-notes.

No. 24. — This exercise cannot be practised too slowly at first. For its chief aim is the connecting — as closely as possible — the two Thirds:



smoothly together. The player must endeavor to bring over the 3d and 5th fingers to the keys in such manner that they may *glide* rather than *jump*. This requires a considerable exertion of strength on the part of the fingers, especially if the arm remains firm in position. It is, therefore, perfectly clear that the exercise is most profitable when played very slowly, powerfully and as *legato* as possible. It is easier in quick tempo, because in the passage given above the fingers glide more easily. The *variant* on the same page, in which the Thirds in the right hand ascend, and those in the

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bass descend, offers some difficulties on account of the stretches, but is perhaps less awkward; here, too, a slow tempo is advisable.

No. 25. — This exercise in Sixths is difficult for very small hands only; but in a slow tempo it is generally conquered before very long. Somewhat more difficult is the second part with the descending figure; this requires slow tempo and precise, even attack where the fingers cross. The upper arm must always be held close to the body.

No. 26. — Only slowly and forcibly; to be played in hardly more than 4 keys.

No. 27. — This exercise may be played in any tempo, provided it sounds distinct. It is advisable to take it through in both *piano* and *forte*. The chief care here must be for a very exact and uniform *connection* of the tones.

No. 28. — A genuine finger-breaker *à la Tausig*, especially for small hands! But also one of the most original inventions of the great executive artist, who in technical combinations has evinced so much cleverness; there exists perhaps no second exercise aiming, like this No. 28, with such directness and certainty at developing the stretch between the 2d and 3d fingers. In execution the hand must be stretched and the fingers firmly bent. Players with small hands will hardly be able to avoid sometimes holding the 2d and 3d fingers stretched out high and rigid; the augm. Fourth $\frac{g}{c\sharp}$ or $\frac{a}{e\flat}$ will always be difficult for short fingers. Nevertheless, this exercise is so efficacious and beneficial, that it cannot be sufficiently recommended. Only let the player practise it with moderation and leisurely, carefully avoiding all excessive fatigue.

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Nos. 29 and **30.** — Each of these exercises consists of several parts, each part to be gone through by itself. The first part in No. 29 contains the chromatic scales as a basis for double-notes; in No. 30 the chromatic scale lies in the higher part of the double-notes. The other parts are each another combination of double-notes in chromatic progression; here the tempo cannot well be prescribed. It is hardly necessary to say, that in playing each double-note the greatest distinctness combined with a perfect *legato* is absolutely essential.

The whole series of exercises in double-notes is to be recommended only to advanced pupils who have passed beyond the middle stage, or to such as have long and powerful fingers; these will be able, even should their technical skill be not yet markedly developed, to go through most of these exercises in double-notes without risk of incurring excessive fatigue.

Wrist-exercises.

Although mention has already been made (p. 15) of the proper manner of beginning and going through the wrist-exercises, the author deems it expedient to return to the subject with some additional remarks. That in all octave-passages the black keys are generally to be struck with the 4th finger, will be best realized by the player in executing the chromatic scale in octaves, *without following the author's method*, therefore with the arms unrestrained, being *only* concerned to keep the hand so quiet that it does not slide

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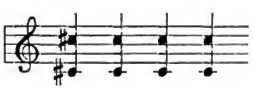
forward and backward, but remains in the same position. Here he will at once discover that the 4th finger automatically — so to speak — falls on the black keys; these are shorter than the white ones, and to reach them, the finger must be more extended. The 5th finger is often unable to reach from a white key to a black one unless the hand pushes it forward, while the 4th finger naturally lies perfectly free near the black key; it has only to strike it, without the least stretching being necessary. The author can give the fullest assurance that Liszt and Thalberg (his teacher) as a rule played octaves in no other way, and only in certain special leaps here and there used the 5th finger, along with the 4th, on black keys. It has happened of late that virtuosi and teachers make frequent use of the 5th finger on black keys. The author ventures to disapprove of this usage, and to maintain that it can be justified by exceptional circumstances only. That the "Daily Studies" contain no actual Octave-exercises, is explained in the preface to that work by the fact that Theodor Kullak's "Method of Octaves" has exhausted the subject, so that nothing new remains to be said on this head.

The author therefore refers students to that work, at the same time offering the suggestion that the wrist-exercises on the single tones  be repeated 10, 20, or 30 times, or oftener, as they are among the most strengthening. Moreover, the chromatic scale in the compass of an octave, with the hands in contrary motion,

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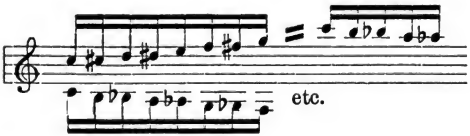
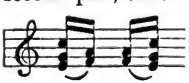


practised with the arms and elbows close to the body, is an excellent preparation for the most difficult passages which require the action of the wrist, such as now come under consideration.

No. 31. — The wrist-exercises of this collection are subject to no particular tempo — the player may, when he has mastered the difficulties and made sure of uniform wrist-motion, choose the tempo for himself. The beginning should, however, even with trained players, be taken quite slow, for the *perfectly uniform* raising and lowering of the hand is the first indispensable condition, and is attainable and kept under *sure* control at first only by slow playing, with arms and elbows close to the body. The player has but to attend to the *one point*, that the elbow lie in front as steady as possible — everything else will come of itself, including the stroke with the fleshy finger-tip.

No. 32. — This exercise (devised by the author of this work for his own use) should be played loud, and with perfect evenness. The pupil should give the preference to tonalities having many black keys. In playing the exercise *legato*, be *very careful not to clip off* the 1st pair of sixteenths from the second pair, thus:

 ; the 2d sixteeenth should be *fully sus-*

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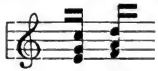
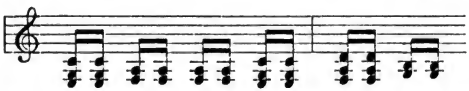
tained; at the two sixths  the hand should be pushed along, as it were, without being raised.

The following repetition may be employed as a variant:



No. 33. — In this exercise perfect evenness of stroke in both hands is the chief condition. To attain this, the hands should remain always spread out over the keys, so that between the last chord of the left hand and the first of the right, and contrariwise, no break be felt, and the chords sound as if played by one hand.

No. 34. — A very difficult exercise, but one which gives to the wrist and the fingers certainty and force in the most difficult positions, especially in striking black keys. It may, without special fatigue, be carried through all the keys (at least through 6 or 8) at a time, by large hands; it will be better for small hands, which find the stretches difficult, to play it through only 2 or 3 keys at a time, choosing, however, new keys each time it is resumed.

No. 35. — An exercise of complex difficulty. To be practised slowly with a powerful stroke, the fingers always falling hammer-fashion.

No. 36. — The elbows must absolutely lie close to the body without moving from it; *since the forearm in leaping must always move to and fro*, the only possibility of a sure control over the correct and uniform raising and lowering of the wrist is in the steadiness of the elbows in their position.

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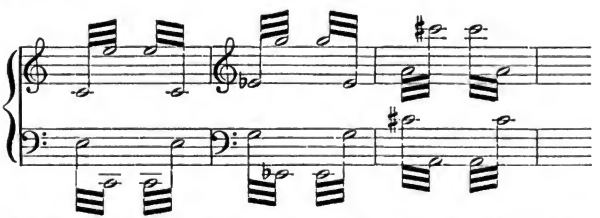
No. 37. — In this exercise there can certainly be no question as to the *method;* the point is, to play it well and distinctly, whatever position be chosen. Here let the player find out for himself how to get through. If he has, by diligent, correct practice of the foregoing exercises, strengthened his fingers and developed a supple and steady wrist, this exercise will present no great difficulties; — no one will find it easy!

Stretches and Skips.

Instead of theorizing how the pupil may best acquire the proper execution of Stretches and Skips, the author ventures to make a *practical* proposition at once. Let the following figure be played:



at first very slowly, with the fingers fully stretched out; the hand must *not* raise itself, or jump, but must, as it were, be drawn; take the tempo gradually faster and faster; the wrist must be kept quite easy, so that the drawing motion of the hand to the right and the left may take place without any difficulty. After these preparatory exercises have been gone through with for 8 or 10 days, the pupil may proceed to the exercises in the "Daily Studies."

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No. 38. — Always stretch, not jump. Here is a *variant* of greater difficulty:

No. 39. — Same rule as just before, same *variant.*

No. 40. — Similarly.

No. 41. — It is impossible to play this exercise with the upper arm *quite close* to the body. But the pupil who attacks this exercise must have already practised the others so well as to make it *easy* for him to hold the elbows at least pretty *near* to the body, and not turned outward so as to form an angle, as it were, < >, as is the habit of some players.

Nos. 42 to **47.** — All these exercises are to be played in the manner indicated for the preparatory exercises. That the left hand has great difficulties to overcome, the author is perfectly aware. But he offers the following observations. In the first place, these most difficult exercises occur *at the end* of Book II; the place that they occupy sufficiently indicates that the editor takes for granted they are to be played only after the preceding ones have all been pretty well mastered. And in the second place: If the pupil is so far advanced, this exercise in the left hand will no longer appear so excessively difficult, and will seem but the last stage of technical finish. No. 47 requires a very light hand and at the same time a powerful stroke.

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BOOK III.

This book contains no strictly systematic exercises. It offers, however, much that is new, and many original combinations, especially in the part following the Preludes, which is the work of Tausig alone. A few words may be not unacceptable to the student as to the technical purpose aimed at in these Preludes. Tausig's idea was, that after having gone through the purely mechanical exercises the pupil should take up some small and difficult pieces, in which one and the same passage should be played in different positions, and with all the various shadings of tone-color, thus combining with mechanical difficulty every variety of touch and of delivery. His sketches of the fifth and the seventh Preludes show several *variants*, after his manner of constantly speculating and philosophizing concerning technics and rhythmics, resolving each single passage into its parts, then from heterogeneous passages combining something entirely new. He intended that the Preludes should in this way be very comprehensive, but his untimely death prevented the completion of the undertaking. The editor can, therefore, only give some hints as to the ten Preludes which are published.

Prelude I. Give to the 1st and 4th sixteenth in every beat a full and strong accent, yet *each time* with a different degree of power, so that the higher notes of the double-notes form a melodic phrase. Especially this:

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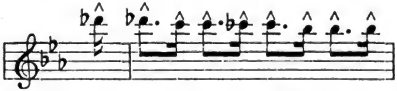
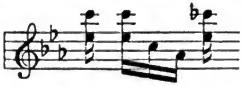
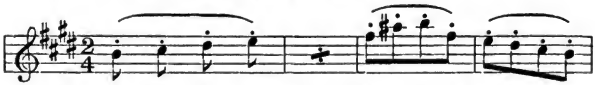


should be well accentuated; the last four measures as forcibly and brilliantly as possible. In the second measure, at



the fingering $\frac{5}{2}$ 1 2 may be applied.

Prelude II. It is the aim in this little piece to carry a melody through constantly ascending and descending chords, so that it may be heard penetrating through them. The player should, therefore, endeavor so to accentuate the uppermost tone of each chord, that the melody



may be clearly heard. The whole Prelude is to be played in this way; each chord contains in its uppermost note a part of the melody.

Prelude III. Easy as this piece may at first appear, a good and distinct performance of it is very difficult. The fingering is often very awkward, and yet cannot be bettered. The editor considers this little piece as altogether masterly, and characteristic of Tausig's faculty of combination.

Prelude IV. This Prelude may be taken in the quickest tempo; the accent is always on the double-notes. The hand is of course to be kept quiet, otherwise the piece could not be played.

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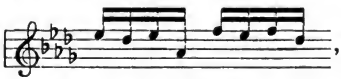
Prelude V. The double-notes are to be played in both hands always ; in the 4th measure a strong *crescendo.*

Prelude VI. The chords must here be struck off with the greatest delicacy and in harp-fashion; at the *ff* the 4th and the 5th fingers must strike with marked emphasis.

Prelude VII. To be played very delicately and melodiously, especially  , and the similar figure in the 4th measure; from the 5th measure on, *crescendo* up to *forte:* the last 3 measures in accelerated tempo.

Prelude VIII. To be played like the roll of a drum, and so that the playing of one hand cannot be distinguished from that of the other.

Prelude IX. The difficulty here introduced is the fruit of considerable thought. The chief point is, that the fingers which have the double-notes should be shoved along, not lifted: this requires a great exertion of strength. The "Andante sostenuto" applies, strictly speaking, only to the first study of the piece. If this Prelude can also be played well in rapid tempo, so much the better.

Prelude X. The melody lies in the 2d sixteenth of every beat; it must, therefore, be somewhat accentuated, yet without being held beyond its value. To play this Prelude with perfect technical correctness, and at the same time with elegance and melodiousness, is by no means an easy task.

As to the exercises which follow these Preludes, the editor does not deem it necessary to expatiate on them, as on the exercises in Book II. He who can play this Book III must

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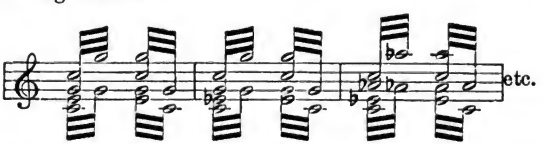
necessarily be so advanced as not to need any special commentary. The editor will only call attention to what may interest even the most practised player, namely, *the various ways of playing one and the same exercise.* For instance, No. 2 has three *variants;* first, the sixteenths are played *legato*, the accompanying eighths *staccato:* then the latter *legato*, the former *staccato:* the 3d variant is the perfect *legato* of all the notes.

No. 3a was a favorite figure of Tausig's; he made much account of it, and deemed it very useful.

No. 4 was most likely suggested by Chopin's 1st Etude, Op. 10. Tausig, who had very small hands, invented for himself the most difficult stretches, in order to make good, in a measure, by practice, the defects he had inherited from nature, otherwise so bountiful to him.

No. 6 will certainly interest every pianist as a witness to Tausig's untiring study, and his industry in forming all possible combinations.

No. 7 is an exercise for testing the rapid withdrawal of one thumb from a key, and the elastic and distinct stroke of the other immediately after upon the same key. The editor ventures the suggestion that the end may perhaps be more immediately attained by conceiving the exercise in the following manner:



No. 7a is another exercise devised by Tausig for testing himself, like Nos. 12 and 17b.

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Nos. 9 and **10** afford excellent practice in changing fingers on the same keys.

No. 13 to be played both *staccato* and *legato*.

No. 16, in the same way.

No. 18. Whoever has heard Tausig play Chopin's *e*-minor concerto, and remembers how he played the closing measures of the Finale, not with both hands in bound triplets but in alternating octaves in the quickest tempo, and how this stormy passage always sounded so distinct that each single note could be plainly heard, will recognize in No. 18 the preparatory study for those closing measures of the Chopin Finale. Tausig acted on the principle that the player can best master a difficult passage, not by attacking it at once, but by first taking up *other exercises containing the same class of difficulty*, but in all possible positions and keys. In this way, purely mechanical proficiency will have attained such a pitch, that the player may, when practising the difficult passage in question, at the same time add all the necessary minutiæ of the delivery. In this way, doubtless, did Tausig study those last measures of Chopin's concerto. And with this reminiscence of the great and nobly ambitious artist, whom death tore from art and from his friends, the editor brings this little work to a close.

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